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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to: (1) assess how evaluation recommendations have been addressed by decision makers and administrators; (2) examine the impact of evaluations on program development; (3) identify factors affecting the utilization of evaluation findings and recommendations; and (4) provide recommendations to enhance utilization of information for future evaluation by the Office of Educational Accountability (OEA). A sample of six program evaluations, representing the full range of OEA evaluation activities, was selected from those conducted during 1982-83 and 1983-84. Data were gathered by means of: (1) open-ended in-depth interviews with the evaluators and administrators involved in the six evaluations; (2) a telephone survey of school-level program staff of one of the six programs; and (3) a documentation review. The following recommendations were made: (1) institute procedures to follow up major evaluations after the final report; (2) involve administrators in a review of findings; (3) offer program implementers orientation and opportunity for input into the process; (4) increase the dissemination activities undertaken by OEA; (5) provide each school with a data summary; (6) establish a policy for preparing recommendations by OEA evaluators that incorporate effective criteria; and (7) incorporate into the OEA 1985-86 follow-up study an analysis of how administrators address and use evaluation information. Appendices include a description of the six selected evaluations, a table showing implementation status of recommendations from six evaluation reports, and an overview of the use of evaluations in education. (JAZ)

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DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EVALUATIONS OF SIX DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROGRAMS

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OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY
PROGRAM EVALUATION DEPARTMENT

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A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EVALUATIONS OF SIX DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROGRAMS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Evaluations of DCPS programs are conducted by the Program Evaluation Department of the Office of Educational Accountability (OEA) to provide information to decision makers that will help them determine if programs should be continued, modified or eliminated. Evaluations also are expected to provide recommendations that serve as guidelines for the future operation of evaluated programs.

The study reported here was designed to: 1) assess how evaluation recommendations have been addressed by decision makers and program implementers; 2) examine the impact of evaluations on program development; 3) identify factors affecting the utilization of evaluation findings and recommendations; and 4) provide recommendations to enhance utilization of information for future OEA program evaluations. In this study, special attention was given to the role of program staff in the evaluation process, dissemination of final reports, and follow-up activities conducted by OEA.

A sample of six program evaluations, representing the full range of OEA evaluation activities, was selected from those conducted during the 1982-83 and 1983-84 school years. Data were gathered by means of: 1) open-ended in-depth interviews with the evaluators and program administrators involved in the six evaluations; 2) a telephone survey of school-level program staff of one of the six programs; and 3) a documentation review.

Findings

All recommendations from the six evaluations comprising this study were reported as having been addressed, and 84% had been completely or partially implemented within one year following publication of the final evaluation report. The most important keys to implementation were the project manager's commitment to the evaluation and his or her authority to implement recommendations.

The majority of implemented recommendations dealt with activities and procedures program managers could carry out under their own authority, and did not require major budgetary changes. Fully implemented recommendations were those which tended to identify general program needs, rather than specific ones, and mainly involved increasing or enhancing ongoing program activities, rather than starting new ones.

Program managers held positive expectations about the eventual impact of the evaluations, and these expectations were largely confirmed. Several kinds of impact were found. Evaluations: 1) helped improve the definition, direction and scope of activities in the programs; 2) provided information on the effectiveness of existing procedures; 3) identified problems in record-keeping, leading to tightening of record management procedures; and 4) provided support for continued funding.

A major factor contributing to evaluation utilization was the participation of program managers in the evaluation process. They, and other program administrators, participated in the formulation of evaluation objectives, in the planning of the evaluation, in the development of data-collection instruments, and in the gathering of data. This ensured that the evaluations addressed relevant programmatic issues and ensured that findings had direct utility for program development and decision making.

While positive about their role in the evaluation process, program administrators suggested that they also be invited to participate in preliminary reviews of findings and recommendations, with the evaluator, while the report was being prepared. Similarly, it was suggested that program implementers be given more extensive orientation at an early point in the process and more opportunity to provide input into the evaluation.

Dissemination of evaluation information appeared to be limited in its scope and its impact on recipients of reports. It was felt by program staff that more effective dissemination and other OEA follow-up activities were needed, and that these could be beneficial to both the evaluation process and implementation practices. In addition to written materials from OEA, discussions and other oral presentations of evaluation information were viewed as particularly effective possibilities.

Recommendations

1. Institute procedures to routinely follow-up all major evaluations after dissemination of the final report.

2. Involve program administrators in a preliminary review of the findings and recommendations.

3. Offer program implementers more extensive and earlier orientation and opportunity for input into the evaluation process.

4. Increase the number and kinds of dissemination activities undertaken by OEA.

5. Provide for each participating school a summary of the data collected at that school.

6. Consider establishing a policy for preparing recommendations by OEA evaluators that incorporates criteria which have proven effective.

7. Incorporate into the proposed OEA 1985-86 follow-up study an analysis of how different levels of administrative and program staff address evaluation recommendations and utilize evaluation information.

Adoption of these recommendations would result in an expansion of OEA program evaluation staff activities and increased costs for carrying out evaluations. This would impact on the number of evaluations that OEA could undertake with its present resources.

INTRODUCTION

Evaluations of educational programs are carried out by the Office of Educational Accountability (OEA) at the request of Dade County Public School (DCPS) administrators, the School Board and in compliance with federal and state requirements. Basic products of evaluations are findings, and the recommendations based on those findings. The evaluation information is expected to serve decision makers who must decide if a program is to be continued, modified or eliminated, and to provide guidelines for future program implementation.

Reported here is a follow-up study designed to assess the degree to which evaluation findings and recommendations have been addressed by decision makers and program implementers in the Dade County Public Schools. Factors affecting the timely utilization of program evaluations were also explored, along with the impact of the evaluation process on program development. Based on the results of this study, recommendations are presented to enhance the utilization of evaluations carried out by OEA.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This follow-up study had two major objectives: 1) to determine evaluation impact on programs by assessing the degree to which recommendations were addressed and by identifying other outcomes the evaluation had on program development; and 2) to identify procedures that will enhance the usefulness of evaluation for program development and policy decisions.

The following questions were considered regarding the recommendations and evaluation impact from the sample of selected program evaluations:

1. To what extent were evaluation recommendations addressed by program managers?

2. What factors influenced the utilization of program evaluation findings and recommendations?

3. What kinds of impact did the evaluations have in addition to changes brought about by the implementation of evaluation recommendations?

The following questions were considered regarding evaluation procedures and enhancement of evaluation effectiveness and utility:

4. What kind of involvement did program administrators and staff have in the evaluation process?

5. What evaluation procedures might be included to enhance evaluation utilization?

6. Are current dissemination and follow-up procedures effective for ensuring that program staff understand findings and recommendations?

7. What dissemination and follow-up procedures might enhance implementation of recommendations?

METHODOLOGY

Sample of Program Evaluations

Six program evaluations were randomly selected from those conducted during the 1982-83 and 1983-84 school years. The final sample represents: 1) various funding sources (Federal, State and local); 2) different sources of evaluation requests (Federal/State requirements, Administrative Staff, and The School Board); 3) internal (OEA) and external (contracted) evaluations; and 4) different time intervals since the evaluation reports were completed and disseminated.

Table 1 presents a summary of the characteristics of the six selected projects. A description of each evaluation study is presented in Appendix A. Three of the six evaluations were conducted during the 1982-83 school year and three during the 1983-84 school year. The amount of time from the completion of the evaluation report to the present follow-up study varied from eight months (College Assistance Program, CAP) to twenty-one months (Beginning Teacher Program, BTP).

Three of the six evaluations were conducted on new programs that were evaluated in subsequent years. The other three evaluations involved ongoing programs; of those, two were evaluated in the following school year.

Five of the six evaluations were designed to look at program effects on students, and in some instances on parents and staff. These were all evaluations of Bureau of Education programs. The sixth evaluation was of a new program in the Bureau of Staff Development, and was designed to assess the effect of the program on developing the professional competence of beginning teachers (BTP).

Five of the six evaluations were conducted by the Program Evaluation Department. An external evaluation team carried out The Dropout Reduction and Prevention Program evaluation (Project Success).

In summary, the six evaluation studies selected from those conducted in the school years 1982-83 and 1983-84, represent the full range of evaluation activities undertaken by the Program Evaluation Department.

Procedures

Three kinds of procedures were used to conduct this follow-up study. They were: 1) review and analysis of project evaluation related documentation; 2) open-ended in-depth interviews; and 3) telephone surveys.

Documentation Review

These procedures included a review and analysis of documentation related to each of the six evaluations. The documents included: administrative staff responses to reports, evaluation reports from succeeding years, evaluation needs assessment, and other relevant documents as available.

TABLE 1

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EVALUATIONS IN THE FOLLOW-UP STUDY

PROGRAM	EVALUATION REQUESTED BY	TARGET POPULATION	PROGRAM STATUS AT EVALUATION: NEW/ONGOING	SCHOOL YEAR EVALUATION CONDUCTED	DATE REPORT PUBLISHED	SUBSEQUENT PROGRAM EVALUATION(S)
COLLEGE ASSISTANCE (CAP)	DCPS Administrative Staff	Eleventh and Twelfth Grade Students, District-wide	Ongoing	1983-84	October, 1984	
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (AEP)	DCPS Administrative Staff	Academically Above Average Elementary Students Enrolled in AEP in 24 Schools	New	1983-84	September, 1984	1984-85
ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES: (ESOL) Oral Fluency of Limited English Proficient 12th Grade Students	School Board	LEP Twelfth Grade Students Enrolled in ESOL, District-wide	Ongoing	1983-84	August, 1984	1984-85, Evaluation of ESOL Exit Criteria for Senior High Students
DROPOUT PREVENTION (Project Success)	Federal/State Requirement (ECIA, Chapter II)	High Risk Students in Grades 9-12 in Four Senior High Schools	New	1982-83	February, 1984	1983-84 1984-85
COMPUTER EDUCATION (CEP)	Federal/State Requirement (ECIA, Chapter II)	Elementary/ Secondary Students in 132 Schools	Ongoing	1982-83	December, 1983	1983-84 1984-85
BEGINNING TEACHER (BTP)	State of Florida	Elementary/ Secondary Beginning Teachers, District-wide	New	1982-83	September, 1983	1983-84 1984-85

Interviews

In-depth open-ended interviews were held with the evaluator and program manager of each of the evaluations included in the follow-up study. In addition, higher-level program administrators with supervisory responsibility over three projects (CAP, Success, BTP) were interviewed. These interviews were conducted because implementation of some of the recommendations could not be carried out by the program manager without authorization and active support of these higher-level administrators. Although implementation of some recommendations was dependent on decisions by the highest level decision makers (assistant/associate superintendents, the Superintendent of Schools, and the School Board), they were not interviewed for this follow-up study.

Also, for one evaluation, Project Success, the interview process was extended to include staff who had had major responsibility for program implementation in 1982-83 and 1983-84 although they were not designated as program managers. These staff members had responsibility for coordinating activities as well as directly working with students. In addition the designated program manager changed from 1982-83 to 1983-84, and therefore both persons were interviewed.

These interviews covered the following topics: development of evaluation objectives and evaluation plan; involvement of program staff in the design of the evaluation plan; program administrators' expectations of, and actual impact of the recommendations; dissemination and follow-up of evaluation reports; review of evaluation recommendations in terms of implementation status and identification of program persons responsible for their implementations; dissemination and follow-up activities; and suggestions for modification of the evaluation and dissemination process.

Interviews ranged in length from 45 minutes to three hours, with an average length of two hours.

Telephone Survey

A follow-up telephone survey was conducted of a randomly selected sample of teachers responsible for the implementation of evaluation recommendations in one project, the Academic Excellence Program. This project was selected because specific evaluation recommendations directly required actions by AEP principals and teachers for their implementation. The purpose of the survey was to assess the status of each recommendation that involved staff participation for implementation. Other purposes included determining how staff perceived the evaluation process and their knowledge of the findings and recommendations included in the evaluation report.

The survey was carried out in eight schools. Schools were selected from those that had the AEP program in 1983-84 and 1984-85 and had the same AEP teacher both years, or the AEP teacher for 1983-84 and the AEP teacher for 1984-85 were both available for interviewing. The average length of the telephone interview was 15 minutes. All schools and teachers contacted participated in the survey.

FINDINGS

Follow-up of Evaluation Recommendations

This section examines two related issues: 1) to what extent the evaluation recommendations were addressed, and 2) what factors influenced the utilization of the recommendations.

The data presented here were gathered through interviews, a telephone survey and a documentation review. All principal evaluators were interviewed. The final sample of program administrators and staff represents persons with direct responsibility for carrying out the recommendations contained in the six evaluations.

Characteristics of the Recommendations

The total number of recommendations in the six evaluations was 36; the number of recommendations per evaluation ranged from two to eight. The majority of them dealt with program operations and development issues that were the responsibility of the program manager; that is to say, implementation did not require active involvement from decision makers at higher levels in the administrative hierarchy. Recommendations requiring input from higher-level administrators were those that implied budgetary changes or interdepartmental collaboration for successful implementation.

Recommendations varied in the extent to which they specified a set of actions to be taken, but tended to describe general kinds of actions rather than specific ones. An example of a general type of recommendation was: "Some type of credit or other reward needs to be considered for the teachers involved in the project, especially team leaders." An example of a relatively specific recommendation was: "Teachers who teach the after-school programs should receive equitable compensation for extra time required."

Implementation Status

The status of each recommendation was assessed using a coding system adapted from two studies designed to measure the utilization of evaluation and consultant recommendations ir mental health programs (Anderson, Ciarlo and Brodie, 1981; Larsen and Werner, 1981). The categories used in the coding system were modified to reflect the specific context of educational programming in the Dade County Public Schools System. Table 2 presents the categories and their definitions.

TABLE 2

Utilization Categories and Their Definitions

1. Considered and rejected. Discussion of the recommendation took place. The decision was made that action would not be taken on the recommendation, or that action was not possible at that time.

2. Under consideration. Discussion of the recommendation took place, or action was pending further information.

3. Partially implemented or implemented in modified form. Decision was taken to implement the recommendation. It was in the process of being implemented, was implemented only in some schools, or certain features of the recommendation were modified to adapt to program needs.

4. Implemented as presented. This category includes the following: a new action, practice or policy; an intensification of a pre-existing action, practice or policy; or confirmation of an action taken prior to the presentation of evaluation recommendations.

In Appendix B, a summary of the implementation status of each of the 36 recommendations made by OEA evaluators for the six programs is presented. The basis for analysis was the implementation status of the 36 recommendations within a year following the publication of each of the six reports. For one program (Project Success), the implementation status is presented for the two years following the evaluation in 1982-83. These data illustrate how some evaluation recommendations require more than one school year for full or even partial implementation. However, in the analysis of the implementation status of the recommendations for Project Success, only the outcomes of the twelve months following the evaluation were included.

As can be seen, all recommendations were addressed by program managers. The vast majority, 84%, were implemented in some form, and less than 10% were rejected:

Considered and rejected	8%
Under consideration	8%
Partially implemented	28%
Implemented as presented	56%

There are no established yardsticks to indicate how these percentages compare with utilization results elsewhere. However, the fact that all were addressed, and implementation of over 80% begun within a year, shows that OEA recommendations receive priority consideration among program managers.

Of the three recommendations rejected, one was a possible misinterpretation by program administrators, one was not funded--although both the program manager and his director were in agreement and requested additional funding, and one was not possible because of physical space limitations. Actions on the other recommendations not implemented at the time of this follow-up study are pending the outcome of evaluation studies conducted during the 1984-85 school year.

There were ten recommendations partially implemented. Of these, four were implemented in some schools but not others, and six were being implemented but in a manner at variance with that suggested in the recommendations. In many cases it was a budgetary constraint that limited the scope of implementation; in these cases, project managers were in agreement with the recommendations but were unable to provide the funds necessary to carry them out.

Among the 20 recommendations categorized as being implemented as presented, 30% identified a new action that could be taken to improve the programs. The majority, 60%, were calls for more of the actions already underway in the programs, and 10% were confirmation of actions already taken by the program managers.

In summary, all the evaluation recommendations had been addressed by program managers, and the majority had been completely or partially implemented within a year following the publication of the evaluation report. This high degree of implementation reflects the fact that: 1) the program managers were in agreement with the majority of recommendations; 2) many of the recommendations required enhancing procedures already in place; and 3) the majority of recommendations provided general guidelines, leaving the specifics of implementation up to the program staff.

Impact of Evaluations

In this study, the utility of the evaluations was examined not only by looking at the implementation of recommendations, but also by trying to determine other kinds of program impact. In order to accomplish this, all persons interviewed were asked what their expectations were about the use of findings, what impact the evaluation had on program operations, planning and policy, and what impact the evaluation had on the program once it was completed.

Expectations

It was found that all program managers had positive expectations about the eventual impact of the evaluation on their programs. They expected that the evaluation would indicate how the program was working and would lead to future improvements. For example, one manager of a new program expected that the evaluation would provide the impetus to bring the program into focus and provide direction and thrust for inservice training. Another expected that the evaluation would provide ideas for new program directions to be incorporated into subsequent proposals. A further expectation shared by half of the program managers was that the evaluation would help to continue or expand funding of the program.

Impact During the Evaluation

Program managers indicated that sometimes the evaluator provided information that signaled problems they could begin correcting while the evaluation was in process. For example, during the AEP evaluation, it was found that in some

schools the criteria for dismissal of students from AEP were not clear. This led to clarifying policies and establishing procedures.

In another project, achieving a revision in the pay scale of the staff was attributed by the program manager to his interaction with the evaluator. He provided the needed encouragement for the program manager to once again request a revision in the pay scale and to "push harder" than before. Before the completion of the evaluation, the new pay scale was in effect. The project manager considered that the evaluator had had an important if somewhat indirect role in this outcome.

Postevaluation Impact

Four of the six project managers interviewed indicated that the evaluation had helped give more definition and direction to their programs. The following examples were provided by project managers. The AEP evaluation was described as helping define goals and objectives. The 1982-83 BTP evaluation was reported to be the basis for the 1983-84 program. The evaluation of the oral fluency of limited English proficient students led to a new secondary school level plan, assignment of a Teacher on Special Assignment to work with the secondary program, and an increased number of supervisory activities in the Bilingual Education program. Finally, the evaluation of the Computer Education Project guided the activities of subsequent years which focused on the development of the software consortium.

A related outcome mentioned by program managers was that evaluations had positive effects on program development. They indicated that the evaluation results and recommendations provided them with an independent assessment of the status of program activities and procedures. In addition, the evaluation process was able to confirm if concerns about programmatic issues were justified, and provide suggestions about where modifications might be most effective.

A frequently mentioned impact of the evaluation process was on program record-keeping since evaluations of many programs were affected by a variety of problems with records. This led program managers to try to make changes when possible. For example, the evaluation of English oral fluency revealed that students' records were not up to date, and as a result, new reporting procedures were developed. The Computer Education project changed procedures for keeping requisitions on file due to the problems encountered in the evaluation. The Beginning Teacher Program evaluation confirmed that there were problems tracking beginning teachers, and various procedures were instituted to improve record-keeping. Also, the evaluation of Project Success (Dropout Reduction and Prevention) was affected by difficulty in accessing necessary student records, and attempts were made to modify record keeping procedures.

In keeping with program manager expectations, evaluation reports were found to be important for writing proposals, requesting and receiving additional funding, and obtaining new sources of financial aid. For example, the CAP received a grant from the Knight Foundation to determine how to improve the fund-raising capability of CAP, Inc. The project coordinator believed that the evaluation report contributed to CAP receiving the grant. Also, the Director of the Computer Education project indicated that the evaluation findings contributed to obtaining ECIA, Chapter II funds each year.

Another outcome mentioned by two program managers was that the evaluations led to their requesting other evaluations on different programs or on related aspects of the evaluated program. This was specifically cited in two of the six evaluations under study. For example, the Director of Advanced Academic Programs requested a formal evaluation of the Junior High School Gifted Pilot Program as a consequence of his experience with the AEP evaluation. Also, the evaluation of the oral English fluency of 12th grade ESOL students was followed by a request from the Department of Bilingual/Foreign Language Education for an evaluation of the criteria used to exit limited English proficient students from ESOL programs at all grade levels.

In summary, It was found that the evaluations had impact on program development during and after the evaluation, met the expectations of program managers, and were perceived as having positive benefit for the programs.

Program Staff Response To The Evaluation Process

Involvement of Program Managers and Staff

In five of the six programs included in this sample, program managers indicated that they had been actively involved in the evaluation process. Their involvement included participating in the formulation of evaluation objectives, and the planning of the evaluations. In addition to this direct participation, project managers reported frequent contact and productive interaction with evaluators during the development of data collection instruments and the data gathering phase.

In the case of the program manager that reported non-involvement in the evaluation process, the person had been hired after all planning for both the program itself and the evaluation had been completed and approved by the funding agency. Therefore, there had been program input into the evaluation design, but not by the person who was subsequently assigned the responsibility of carrying out the program. In succeeding years, the program manager reported the same kind of involvement as the other program managers.

Program managers reported limited contact with the evaluator and no input during the data interpretation and report-writing phase of the evaluation.

One of the six project managers reported that he had reviewed evaluation findings and recommendations with the evaluator prior to the completion of the draft of the evaluation report.

It was found that school level personnel who were implementing the program had little contact with evaluators and little input into the evaluation process at any stage. This was reported by program managers and evaluators and confirmed in telephone interviews with program staff of one project.

Program managers and evaluators were in complete agreement that active participation of program administrators in the evaluation process was essential to its utility and that it ensured that the evaluation focused on relevant issues for program development. They expressed their approval of present procedures, but also had recommendations for expanding the role of program staff involvement in the evaluation process.

Respondents' Recommendations

The recommendations made by program staff called for an expansion of current OEA activities. They involve more evaluator contact with school-level staff during the evaluation, and with program administrators during the data interpretation and report writing phases.

Program Implementer Involvement. Various program managers recommended that the evaluator should have more contact with program implementers at the school level. It was suggested that more contact would increase their interest in the findings, motivate them to use the evaluation information for program improvement, and help reduce some of the anxiety that people feel when their program is being evaluated. Also it was thought that increased interaction with the program implementers would provide the evaluator with more knowledge of actual program functioning which would help in the interpretation of data and the development of recommendations.

It was suggested that at the beginning of an evaluation the evaluator should meet with all involved staff to provide an overview of the evaluation. It was indicated that staff should be informed of the rationale for evaluations, what to expect in terms of how the evaluation would be carried out, the kinds of records and information that would be needed, what help they could expect to receive while the evaluation was in progress, and the kind of information that would be available to them at the end of the evaluation.

In summary, it was recommended that school-level personnel be given a thorough orientation prior to the initiation of the evaluation, and that the evaluator should maintain contact with school-level staff during the evaluation. These two recommendations by program managers were proposed as ways of increasing school-level staff interest in, and use of evaluation information, and providing the evaluator with greater opportunity to understand how the program is actually being delivered.

Review of Findings and Recommendations. Program managers in half of the programs indicated that they would like to be able to review the findings and recommendations with the evaluator during the preparation of the report. Both evaluators and program managers said that they would benefit from meetings while the report was being prepared and/or at the time that the draft report was sent for review by program staff. They expressed the opinion that printed information sometimes was not sufficient for understanding how the evaluator arrived at conclusions, and they suggested that an oral presentation would help clarify issues.

It was proposed that the program staff who had worked with the evaluator in planning the evaluation should meet with the evaluator prior to the completion of the draft report. One suggested time was when the evaluator knows what the findings are and has developed his ideas about the recommendations. The intent of the meeting, according to one program manager, "would not be to change the mind of the evaluator but to give the program point of view." Another potential benefit mentioned by the same program manager was that program people would probably feel freer to ask questions and comment on the results before a complete draft of the report was presented. This might lead to greater use of the evaluation information by program staff.

An alternative time suggested for a meeting was during the time reserved for the draft review by program staff. A meeting at this time would ensure that program staff understood the evaluation findings, and were able to read the report critically. This would help in their interpretation of the draft and their preparation of the technical review and/or response to be included with the published report.

Among the six programs in this sample, the program managers reported that no meetings of the kind described above were held. However one program manager indicated that he had discussed the evaluation findings informally with the evaluator; a procedure that they both found beneficial. During the draft review period, a meeting may be initiated at the request of the program manager or OEA. This is an optional procedure within the evaluation process and meetings between program and OEA staff are ordinarily determined by the specific conditions in each evaluation.

In summary, program managers indicated that they would like more contact with the evaluator during the report writing phase. In particular, they would like the opportunity to review findings and recommendations with the evaluator and to provide interpretations from a programmatic viewpoint. Maintaining the independence and objectivity of the evaluator while involving program staff is an issue that must be dealt with if this recommendation is implemented. This will be discussed in the Conclusions section.

Timeliness. For those evaluations where reports could not be completed in time to write proposals, and plan budgets and programs, it was recommended that the evaluator hold an interim meeting to discuss initial findings and possible program difficulties. This information, although preliminary, could be built into proposals and planning for the next school year. A related suggestion was that an interim status report with preliminary findings be provided to program managers that could serve as a working document for planning. This would be a more detailed report than the current status reports now prepared each spring.

Program managers from two Chapter II programs indicated that final evaluation reports generally were not available early enough to aid them in preparing proposals for refunding the program the next school year. (Since Chapter II proposals must be prepared by April, an evaluation that includes posttest results, or end-of-school year data, such as grades, attendance records, or Spring achievement scores cannot possibly be available at the time the proposal is being prepared.) Program managers resolved the issue by incorporating results from the previous year's evaluation into the proposal. Also, the evaluator, upon request, provided technical input for the proposal. Both Chapter II programs in this sample have been continually refunded so that the timeliness of the reports has not been a factor impeding project continuation.

In summary, although the funding cycle for Chapter II and the DCPS budget and planning cycle do not parallel the evaluation cycle (especially when end-of-the-year data are needed), project managers did not mention timeliness as a serious problem inhibiting the usefulness of evaluations. However, an interim report with preliminary findings presented orally or in written form, if there were time, would be of help to program managers and other decision makers, and most likely, enhance the utility of the evaluation.

Evaluation of New Programs. Managers from two programs (both in their initial year of operation) suggested that the evaluation reports provide more information about the context in which the program is carried out. In both cases, they expressed the opinion that the evaluation of a new program should be on a small scale and directed at assessing implementation rather than outcomes. This recommendation needs to be considered jointly with program administrators. Even though OEA has input into the evaluation plan of proposed new programs, it is program staff that have the principal responsibility for the identification of key variables and the design of the new program that will be evaluated. Also, the scale of an evaluation may be determined by Federal/-State requirements for given programs.

In summary, program administrators and staff have a favorable opinion of the OEA evaluation process and their involvement in it. The recommendations indicate however that program managers would like to have more contact with OEA evaluators if possible, during the report writing phase. In particular during this latter phase they would like to be more informed of the data interpretation and recommendation development aspects of the evaluation. All of the recommendations by program managers reported in this section imply additional activities and meetings that will increase the evaluator's workload and will lengthen the evaluation process and extend the amount of time it takes to produce a final evaluation report.

Dissemination and Follow-up Procedures

Dissemination Procedures

At present, all final evaluation reports are transmitted to the Dade County School Board via the Superintendent of Schools. Copies are also provided to all members of the Superintendent's Executive Council and to the program managers and their supervisors. In addition, copies of the reports are sent to the Department of Citizen Information for general distribution. Dissemination of reports beyond this level (e.g., to principals, teachers, DOE, etc.) by OEA is determined on an individual basis according to the nature of the report. Program personnel, however, always have the option of extending the dissemination activities beyond the level provided by OEA.

Among the six evaluations in this follow-up study, the OEA dissemination procedures described above were followed, and evaluation reports were transmitted to all senior level decision makers. The procedures varied for the dissemination of evaluation reports to building-level program personnel. Evaluation reports of two programs were not distributed to building-level program personnel. Among the four remaining programs, the program managers alone or in conjunction with OEA disseminated reports to teachers, principals, and other program implementers. For example, in the College Assistance Program and the Academic Excellence Program, the managers distributed reports to staff during a workshop. All principals with the CAP program received reports while principals with AEP programs received reports on request. For the Dropout Prevention and Reduction Project, one of the program coordinators distributed reports to each school team.

Dissemination of the report of the evaluation of the English oral language proficiency of ESOL students was a joint effort. OEA sent reports to the principals of all senior high schools, and the program manager distributed copies of the executive summary to all ESOL teachers participating in an in-service course in the Fall of 1984.

It was beyond the scope of this study to determine the impact of the dissemination of evaluation reports to staff members of the four programs. However, in the follow-up telephone survey of a random sample of eight AEP schools conducted eight months after the workshop, it was found that only two teachers had copies of the report although all had attended the workshop where the reports were distributed. The other teachers reported that they had not received a copy. When the teachers were asked about the recommendations of the evaluation, four teachers (including the two with reports) were able to identify one of the major evaluation recommendations. They indicated that their knowledge of the evaluation recommendation was based on discussion in the workshops, and also on information provided during follow-up meetings with area directors and other AEP teachers.

These findings suggest that provision of evaluation reports may be an ineffective way to disseminate evaluation findings unless other kinds of follow-up activities are also planned. In addition, the cost of printing evaluation reports lends further support to the need to consider other dissemination strategies. For example, the average printing cost of the six different evaluation reports included in this study was $2.70 and ranged from $1.00 (17 page report) to $7.50 (108 page report).

In summary, in this follow-up study it was found that OEA always transmitted evaluation reports to senior level decision makers and program managers. Also, OEA dissemination of evaluation reports to school-level personnel occurred on a program-by-program basis; for example, OEA distributed the report of the evaluation of English oral language proficiency of ESOL students to all senior high principals. In addition, some program managers assumed responsibility for disseminating full reports or executive summaries to school-level staff. This indicates that program managers perceived the reports as providing useful information that should be shared with those responsible for carrying out the programs on a day-to-day basis. However, the effectiveness of disseminating reports to all involved personnel without follow-up activities needs to be assessed further.

Follow-up Procedures

Follow-up contact between evaluator and program manager for discussion and clarification of the contents of the evaluation report occured infrequently and usually was initiated by the program administrator. Follow-up contact between the evaluator and school-level program staff was reported for only one project.

Program managers from three of the projects indicated that they had met with an OEA evaluator after dissemination of the report to discuss the findings and the recommenations. These program managers indicated their satisfaction with current procedures since they always had access to information when they needed it. They also indicated that the OEA evaluator had always been available to explain technical issues when they requested clarification.

Of the three projects where follow-up contact was not reported, two were evaluated during the next school year. Both program managers indicated that a specific meeting had not been needed; however, both thought that for other projects it would be a good policy. One program manager reported no follow-up contact with the evaluator. He indicated that such a meeting would have been helpful because it would have given him more perspective on his program. This was a project for which there was no scheduled evaluation during the next school year, and therefore no continuing contact with OEA.

It was found that occasionally the meaning of a recommendation or finding, or the procedure for implementation was not clear to a program manager, but clarification was not requested. This occured even though the program managers had indicated satisfaction with their involvement in the evaluation process and their relationship with the evaluator. This suggests the need for some formal follow-up mechanism to ensure that evaluation findings and recommendations are understood by program managers.

Respondents' Recommendations

All program managers agreed that it is important to disseminate evaluation findings and recommendations to every person involved in the program. While some program managers recommended that evaluation reports be distributed to each individual, others suggested that summaries of the evaluations in a non-technical style be prepared for distribution to all program staff.

Program managers also indicated that an oral presentation of findings and recommendations by the evaluator to the program staff would help ensure the eventual utilization of evaluation information. As indicated above, program managers took it upon themselves in four programs to distribute reports, or summaries, and to discuss the evaluation briefly with program staff. However, these same program managers recommended that the evaluator make oral presentations to staff. This would provide opportunities to clarify issues as well as to establish a feedback process between evaluator and staff to facilitate follow-up. The majority of evaluators also commented that they would like the opportunity to discuss their evaluation with program managers and staff.

Recommendations from program managers indicated that they would like to see OEA adopt a policy of more active dissemination and follow-up of completed evaluations. This was reflected in suggestions for more personal contact and discussion with the evaluator once the report is disseminated, and in the suggestion that evaluators make presentations at staff workshops and district-wide conferences. It was also reflected in suggestions that OEA prepare documentation about the evaluation in a variety of written formats in addition to the usual full report and executive summary currently disseminated by OEA.

Various types of summary forms were suggested including: 1) a non-technical report destined for teachers and staff involved in carrying out the program; 2) summary document to principals presenting recommendations and suggested actions; 3) periodic research updates briefly describing the salient findings of each completed evaluation so that the field would understand the findings and their relevance for the evaluated program; 4) summary of evaluation reports to be included as part of the Budget Review process, and 5) annual written and oral presentation of evaluations at a School Board Conference Session.

In summary, the recommendations by program staff all imply OEA undertaking additional activities. In order to satisfy the different needs of all the interested audiences, various kinds of written materials were suggested. Also highlighted was the need to make oral presentations to explain the evaluation findings. These recommendations indicate that the program managers were pleased with the evaluation process and want to expand it to enhance their understanding and that of their staff. To effectively implement the suggested activities would increase the workload of each evaluator. Given the present responsibilities and evaluation demands, careful consideration and experimentation would be needed to determine which, if any, recommendations could be implemented under present conditions, and which would require additional funds

or significant readjustments in work schedules.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

To what extent were recommendations addressed by program managers?

It was found that the majority, 84% of recommendations, were implemented or were in the process of being implemented within a year of the completion of the evaluation. All the recommendations had been reviewed by the project managers and consideration had been given to the feasibility of implementing each of the recommendations. These findings indicate that in the Dade County Public Schools evaluation information is utilized by program managers. This is consistent with other studies in the evaluation utilization literature that indicate that there is a greater tendency at the local level to act upon evaluation information than at the state or national level (Alkin, Daillak and White, 1979; Boruch and Cordray, 1980; Caplan, Morrison and Stambaugh, 1975; King and Pechman, 1984; Weiss, 1981).

What factors influenced the utilization of program evaluation findings and recommendations?

All the recommendations that had been fully implemented (including both those that suggested new actions, and those that suggested intensification of actions) did not require significant financial expenditures or new budget allocations. In general, implementation of these recommendations could be carried out by the program manager and staff. The key to implementation was the project manager's agreement with the recommendations and commitment to implementation. These findings are consistent with information about evaluation reported elsewhere (Leviton and Hughes, 1981; Patton, Grimes, Guthrie, Brennan, French and Blyth, 1977).

The recommendations that were partially implemented or were not implemented by the time of this follow-up are illustrative of major factors that affect utilization of evaluation recommendations. These include: financial constraints; misinterpretation of findings and recommendations; authorization from higher level DCPS decision makers; and action by individual school-level administrators. Another factor influencing implementation is the decision maker's desire for more information before taking action. This occurs, for example, when there is a series of evaluations planned for a program, and the decision maker decides that action will be taken only if consistent results are found over a period of years.

Those recommendations that required a sufficient change in program financing for their implementation were less likely to be implemented within a year. In each instance, the project manager, and the director with administrative responsibility over the program was in agreement; however, budget allocations were not made, at least within one year of the completion of the evaluation.

Another factor that influenced partial implementation was the degree to which persons other than the program manager were responsible for the implementation of a recommendation. In the majority of these instances, it was reported that implementation had occurred in only some schools.

The majority of recommendations tended to focus on general areas of needed action, leaving specific procedures and strategies for implementation for the program staff to design. The high percentage of implementation can be

attributed, in part, to the form of the recommendations (general rather than specific), and to the fact that the majority called for the intensification, enhancement or expansion of existing procedures, strategies and policies.

What kinds of impact did the evaluations have in addition to any changes in program brought about by the implementation of evaluation recommendations?

Evaluations had various kinds of impact. Among those described by the program managers were: 1) Evaluations helped improve the definition, direction and scope of activities of the program, and provided confirmation of those procedures and activities that had been in place and were effective. 2) Evaluations identified problems in record keeping which led to tightening up of record management procedures. 3) Evaluations provided support for continued funding, and for obtaining funds from new sources. 4) Evaluations identified program needs that required additional study. This resulted in requests to OEA for new evaluations, or for the inclusion of new evaluation questions in already scheduled evaluations. Also, program manager satisfaction with the evaluation process and the kinds of help provided by OEA have led to requests for evaluation of programs that had not been evaluated previously.

In addition, information about program difficulties or needs provided by the evaluator while the evaluation was in process had a positive impact. This kind of feedback provided program managers with the opportunity to effect beneficial changes in program operation within the school year rather than wait for publication of the final report.

What kind of involvement did program administrators and staff have in the evaluation process?

Program managers were actively involved in the evaluation process. They participated in the formulation of evaluation objectives, the planning of the evaluation, the development of data collection instruments, and the gathering of data. This follows the generally accepted guidelines for carrying out evaluations that are utilized by program managers (Brown and Braskamp, 1980; Brinkerhoff, Brethower, Hluchyj, Nowarkowski, 1983; Patton, 1978).

In general, program managers were not involved in analyzing evaluation data, interpreting the results, or formulating recommendations. They did review the final draft of the evaluation report and, at that time, provided corrections for "errors of fact" when found, and expressed opinions regarding interpretations of the evaluation data and, in some instances, implementation of recommendations.

School-level program staff received little orientation about the evaluation process, had minimal input into the design of the evaluation, and did not participate in the review of findings and recommendations. Therefore, the persons directly involved in carrying out the programs, and often the ones responsible for providing data basic to the evaluation were unlikely to have a complete understanding of the evaluation process. This could impact on their participation in the evaluation and their motivation to carry out recommended program changes.

What evaluation procedures might be included to enhance evaluation utilization?

Nearly all the people interviewed indicated that the utility and impact of the

evaluation information could be enhanced by increased attention to three factors: relevance, participation and timing. Increased dialogue between evaluators and program implementers (especially principals and teachers) to communicate the purposes, methods and results of the evaluation could have an impact on implementation of recommendations. Also, contact could produce useful input from implementers to evaluators. This communication should have the effect of increasing the relevance of evaluations to the people who are most immediately affected by it, thus enhancing their responsiveness to the recommendations.

Program managers, evaluators and nationally recognized experts on evaluation utilization believe that increasing the participation of program administrators in the interpretation of evaluation findings would enhance utilization of information and implementation of recommendations (Alkin, et al, 1979; King and Pechman, 1984; Patton, 1978). Also, reviewing evaluation findings and interpretations during the report writing phase could help to ensure that the final evaluation report adequately reflected the program context in which the evaluation was conducted. Participation, particularly by program managers, could be viewed simply as the first step in the utilization process with program people assisting in determining how evaluation findings might best be used to improve programs.

While program input is important to the evaluator when verifying interpretations of findings and considering recommendations, it also is essential that the independence and objectivity of the evaluator not be compromised. Therefore, an important issue is to establish the timing and the procedures for review of evaluation results by program staff. It is advisable that meetings should only be held after the data have been analyzed, and interpretations and recommendations have been written. With this preliminary documentation as a frame of reference, the interpretation and implications of the findings can be discussed more readily. A policy could be established to determine how unresolved differences in interpretation will be reported.

Because of unavoidable scheduling differences between program and budget preparation deadlines and the evaluation end-of-year-measurement needs in most projects, it was recommended that OEA evaluators produce interim summaries of preliminary findings on an as-needed basis. For maximum impact and usefulness of such preliminary findings, it was suggested by those interviewed that the findings be presented orally in meetings, and if time permitted, in written reports as well.

Are current dissemination and follow-up procedures effective for ensuring that program staff understand findings and recommendations?

The current dissemination procedure, in which OEA distributes reports to program managers and they and/or OEA (on a program-by-program basis) distribute the same report to school-level program implementers, appears to have limited effectiveness. It was found that reliance on this method of dissemination did not produce, among program implementers, the level of awareness and knowledge of evaluation results that might have been expected given the quantity of reports distributed.

When evaluation results were remembered by implementers, it was usually associated with a discussion by a program director or supervisor in a workshop or supervisory meeting. Thus program administrators were influential in the dissemination of evaluation information and their leadership was essential to the staff carrying out the recommendations.

Generally, follow-up contacts between evaluator and program managers were usually initiated by program staff and were limited in both number and scope. Even when clarification of some aspects of the evaluation report was needed, some program administrators did not request a meeting or even an explanation by telephone.

What dissemination and follow-up procedures might enhance implementation of recommendations?

It was agreed by those interviewed that OEA should undertake a broader range of dissemination activities to be sure that all program participants clearly understand results and their importance. It was recommended that dissemination activities include both oral and written presentations. Oral presentations were strongly urged in order to clarify any doubts arising from the written presentation. Also, it was indicated that there was a need to regularly schedule a follow-up meeting between the evaluator and the program manager at the completion of each evaluation to discuss findings and the feasibility of implementing recommendations.

A variety of written formats were suggested for disseminating evaluation information, including: reports written in non-technical style; summaries highlighting recommendations and suggested actions; periodic research updates distributed district-wide describing the salient findings of each completed evaluation; and documentation of all evaluations in process to be presented at a School Board Conference Session.

The adoption of any or all of these dissemination and follow-up activities imply a set of additional tasks for the present OEA program evaluation staff. This would impact on the number of evaluations that each evaluator could undertake in a school year. In addition there are cost implications related to the printing and distribution of each of the different kinds of reports. However, the recommendations of program administrators and implementers, familiar with OEA evaluations, indicate that wider dissemination of evaluation findings would provide useful information to DCPS staff who are currently unfamiliar with the scope and depth of the evaluation projects carried out annually.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions of this follow-up study and the suggestions of OEA evaluators and DCPS program administrators. They also incorporate concepts and successful procedures and strategies that have been developed by evaluation specialists involved in federal, state and local evaluation. These recommendations were prepared with the objective of increasing the effectiveness and the impact of evaluation on program development in the Dade County Public Schools.

1. Institute procedures to routinely follow-up all major evaluations after dissemination of the final report. Evaluation plans of programs scheduled annually for evaluation should include an assessment of how information and recommendations from the previous evaluation were utilized. This is a requirement of the State of Florida Beginning Teacher Program and it has been successful in DCPS. Different follow-up procedures will be needed for programs that are not evaluated on a yearly basis.

2. Involve program administrators in a preliminary review of the findings and recommendations. This would provide the evaluator with program input to ensure that interpretations are based on technically correct information and are programatically meaningful. Procedures would need to be considered to determine the appropriate time to hold the review, and the documentation to be presented.

3. Offer program implementers more extensive and earlier orientation and opportunity for input into the evaluation process. A meeting should be scheduled with school-level program staff to orient them to the evaluation, to obtain their perspectives on the functioning of the program, and to identify questions that need to be addressed. After the report is published, an oral presentation of findings and recommendations should be made by the evaluator with the program manager.

4. Increase the number and kinds of dissemination activities undertaken by OEA. It would be useful to develop different kinds of written formats appropriate to the needs and interest of the various audiences involved with the evaluation. Oral presentations should also be planned. In addition, consideration should be given to the responsibilities of program administrators in the dissemination process.

5. Provide for each participating school a summary of the data collected at that school. This feedback to each individual school would provide useful information for improving activities, and would motivate staff to participate in future evaluations.

6. Consider establishing a policy for preparing recommendations by OEA evaluators that incorporates criteria which have proven effective. Criteria to be considered include: difficulty of implementation, specificity of suggested actions, and the potential cost.

7. Incorporate into the proposed OEA 1985-86 follow-up study an analysis of how different levels of administrative and program staff address evaluation recommendations and utilize evaluation information. This study would be designed to track how evaluation findings are used and recommendations are addressed beginning with the program staff review of the evaluation draft. It would also examine the relation of dissemination strategies to decisions and actions.

Adoption of these recommendations would result in an expansion of OEA program evaluation staff activities, and increased costs for carrying out evaluations. This would impact on the number of evaluations that OEA could undertake with its present resources.

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

DESCRIPTION OF THE SIX SELECTED EVALUATIONS

College Assistance Program (CAP)

This program is a component of the College Admissions Service Office which is in the Division of Student Services. It was established in 1977 to encourage and assist the efforts of high school seniors to pursue post-secondary education. CAP advisors provide assistance to students seeking 1) financial aid, 2) information about colleges and entrance examination, and 3) help filling out applications. In addition, as part of the program, a scholarship fund was set up to be administered by CAP, INC., for needy students whose post-secondary education financial aid packages were insufficient.

In the 1977-78 school year, CAP was implemented on a limited basis. As of the 1982-83 school year (the year the evaluation was conducted), a total of 35 part-time CAP advisors were located in all 24 senior high schools in Dade County.

The evaluation was designed to examine the extent to which the program was 1) meeting its goals and 2) providing a worthwhile service. The evaluation was conducted by means of 1) surveys distributed to administrators and guidance personnel in the senior high schools; 2) interviews with administrators, guidance personnel, and students; 3) data collected for The Placement and Follow-up Reports by the Office of Student Support Programs; and 4) data supplied by the College Admissions Services Office.

Academic Excellence Program (AEP)

The Academic Excellence Program (AEP) is a component of the Department of Advanced Academic Education. It was established in 1983 to provide an enrichment curriculum for above average students in grades K-6 and to assist them in maximizing their intellectual potential.

In the 1983-84 school year, AEP was initiated in 24 schools with a total of 28 teachers participating. In the majority of schools, AEP classes are scheduled during the school day, but in a few the classes are all after school.

The evaluation of this program was designed to examine the process of program development and initial implementation during its first year. The evaluation was conducted by means of (1) a review of student participant rosters, (2) on-site observations of program activities, (3) survey instruments completed by parents, students, administrators, AEP teachers, and regular classroom teachers, and (4) interviews with program personnel.

English Oral Fluency of Limited English Proficient (LEP) Twelfth Grade Students (ESOL)

The DCPS Board wanted to know to what extent LEPs were graduating without English fluency. There was concern that LEP students were graduating without the capacity to function effectively on the job or in college because of their inability to express themselves adequately in English. Therefore, The Dade

County Public School Board directed staff to evaluate the oral proficiency of twelfth grade LEP students eligible to graduate. This is the only evaluation in the sample that focused solely on determining one program outcome, oral fluency in English.

Students who are non-native speakers of English, and who lack proficiency in English (limited English proficient or LEP) are enrolled in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes until such time as they can demonstrate competency in English. ESOL classes are provided in all senior high schools with a LEP population by trained and certified ESOL teachers. Students enroll in ESOL while taking content subjects to meet basic course requirements. English oral proficiency is not a state or district requirement; students may graduate while still enrolled in ESOL.

The evaluation was conducted by testing the oral proficiency of LEP students and students who had exited ESOL within the last twelve months. Independent oral proficiency ratings were obtained for students from their respective ESOL or regular English teacher.

Dropout Prevention and Reduction Project (Project Success)

The Dropout Prevention and Reduction Project (Project Success) began in 1981-82 school year as a component of the Division of Student Services to prevent and reduce dropout among high-risk secondary level students. In 1982-83, Project Success received ECIA, Chapter II funding to implement activities with students and a reward system designed to provide incentives for improved behavior and scholarship.

During 1982-83, the initial year of Chapter II funding, Project Success operated in four senior high schools. In each school, the Project was carried out by a support team composed of two to four classroom teachers, one administrative liaison, a counselor, an occupational/placement specialist, and a visiting teacher. Area Intergroup Relations Specialists collaborated with and directed the support teams; one specialist had responsibility for coordinating the activities of the four schools and the program evaluation. Funding was renewed for 1983-84. In 1984-85, Project Success and two other dropout prevention initiatives were combined into one, Project Success, and funded with Chapter II monies.

The 1982-83 evaluation was designed to assess the effectiveness of the program on student school performance and behavior and to determine school staff and students' perceptions of the project's impact. The evaluation was conducted by means of (1) examination of Grade Point Average (GPA), attendance and conduct records of participating students; and (2) surveys of administrators, teachers and project students in the four schools to determine the impact of the project, and its strengths and weaknesses.

Computer Education Project (CEP)

The Computer Education Project (CEP) was established with a grant from Chapter II funds in 1982. The Department of Basic Skills began the Computer Education Program in 1980, and in two years had acquired more than 600 computer systems located in 132 schools. The CEP was designed to provide support and increase the utilization of these computer systems by (1) providing for the maintenance and enhancement of the existing computers; (2) establishing a software consortium, including software and equipment, staffed by a full-time media specialists; and (3) acquiring additional microcomputer equipment.

The 1982-83 school year was the initial year that Chapter II provided funds for the CEP. Chapter II funds have been renewed yearly.

The 1982-83 evaluation was conducted by means of (1) the examination of school inventory lists, purchase requisitions and orders provided by the Department of Basic Skills, Division of Budget and the Purchasing Department; (2) a telephone survey of computer education contact persons; and (3) interviews with computer education specialists and media specialists.

The Beginning Teacher Program (BTP)

The Beginning Teacher Program (BTP) was established in 1982 by the State of Florida in an effort to improve the quality of its educational systems. Teacher participation was mandated in a year long Beginning Teacher Program as a requisite for regular certification for beginning teachers. The program is designed to provide each beginning teacher with a supervised support system to maximize professional competence on twenty-three essential teaching skills. The BTP is a component of the Bureau of Staff Development, but depends on the Bureau of Personnel Management for initial identification of potential participants.

In the 1982-83 school year, the BTP was initiated and implemented district-wide. By state law, each beginning teacher was assigned a support team composed of the school principal, a designated peer teacher, and another professional educator, usually an area or central office administrator, or a university professor.

The evaluation of the Beginning Teacher Program's first year of operation was designed to examine (1) the appropriateness and effectiveness of major program elements, (2) compliance of activities with district and state guidelines, and (3) program impact on beginning teacher performance on the twenty-three essential teaching competencies. The evaluation was conducted by means of (1) surveys completed by beginning teachers and support team members, (2) interviews with selected program participants, and (3) review of program documentation.

APPENDIX B

TABLE 3

Implementation Status of Recommendations from Six Evaluation Reports

Project	Publication Date	Recommendation	Status of Recommendation	Comments and Clarification
College Assistance Program (CAP)	October 1984	1. Increase funding to provide full-time, five days a week coverage in those schools that need extended service.	Partially implemented. Request for full-time CAP advisors was included in 1984-85 Department of Student Services proposed budget.	In 1984-85 four senior high schools expanded their coverage to full-time. A total of six schools have full-time coverage because principals pay for the additional days from the school budget.
		2. Initiate a review of the classification of the CAP advisor position.	Implemented. Recommendation confirmed actions taken by program manager.	Program manager requested reclassification of the CAP advisor position during the evaluation. Interim findings provided support for the request.
		3. Increase the outreach and publicity activities of the CAP advisors to encourage wider student knowledge and use of CAP.	Partially implemented. Recommendation reinforced program direction.	Additional activities were undertaken by a few advisors and administrators. Full implementation depends on budget increases that will provide more staff time for outreach. Also, alternative strategies need to be developed.
		4. Encourage CAP advisors to begin more intensive work with students earlier in the eleventh grade.	Implemented as presented.	During 1984-85, workshops oriented CAP advisors, especially new staff, to more effectively use their time. Procedures facilitated attending to eleventh grade students earlier in the school year.

TABLE 3 (Con't.)

Implementation Status of Recommendations from Six Evaluation Reports

Project	Publication Date	Recommendation	Status of Recommendation	Comments and Clarification
CAP		5. Encourage CAP advisors to conduct assemblies for junior high students to increase their awareness of post-secondary education possibilities and facilitate better course planning.	Implemented as presented. Program administrators intensified attention to this activity.	In 1984-85 there was an increase in the number of CAP advisors included on the senior high articulation teams that visited junior high schools. Due to time limitations, the majority of advisors did not participate in activities at the junior high level. Increased activity depends on expanded full-time coverage.
		6. Clarify the eligibility requirements for the CAP, Inc. scholarships with the advisors to insure an equitable distribution of funds.	Considered and rejected. Possible misinterpretation of recommendation.	Program administrators interpreted recommendation to suggest possible bias in distribution of funds, and disagreed with that. However, the recommendation was directed at the funding for students not planning to attend four-year colleges. They were not being encouraged to apply for scholarships. Program administrators indicated that it was unlikely such students would meet eligibility requirements. Similar concerns about distribution of funds was raised by consultants who studied the scholarship program and CAP, Inc. fund-raising activities.

TABLE 3 (Con't)

Implementation Status of Recommendations from Six Evaluation Reports

Project	Publication Date	Recommendation	Status of Recommendation	Comments and Clarification
CAP		7. Review current training procedures to ascertain whether they adequately inform new advisors.	Implemented as presented.	Training procedures are reviewed annually. After the report was published, another review was held. Program administrators agreed that new CAP advisors needed more training. In the regularly scheduled workshops more orientation was given to new advisors. Time is not available to provide sufficient on-the job training which is needed also.
		8. Provide adequate office space and privacy for all CAP advisors.	Not implemented. This is the responsibility of school administration, not CAP administration. Implementation depends upon available facilities at each school.	Program administrators have recommended that advisors be provided with adequate office space. Problem is shared by all student services personnel and little improvement is possible.

TABLE 3 (Con't.)

Implementation Status of Recommendations from Six Evaluation Reports

Project	Publication Date	Recommendation	Status of Recommendation	Comments and Clarification
Academic Excellence Program (AEP)	September 1984	1. Information regarding children's progress in the program should be more frequently provided to parents.	Implemented as presented. Recommendation dependent upon program staff (school-site) personnel for implementation.	Program director required schools to send home periodic reports in order to keep parents informed. In a survey of 8 randomly selected schools with AEP programs, all had sent home semester or quarterly reports. This was a 38% increase in the number of schools sending home information in 1983-84.
		2. Teachers who teach the after-school programs should receive equitable compensation for extra time required.	Implemented as presented.	The salaries of after-school teachers were adjusted and they were paid the equivalent of a sixth period supplement.
		3. Program instructional staff should be provided with additional inservice training related to the operation of the program and instructional activities. A survey of their needs might be made prior to the actual provision of inservice training.	Implemented as presented.	Three full-day inservice workshops were presented to AEP teachers. In two of the four areas, additional inservice was provided through monthly meetings of the area director with all AEP teachers.

TABLE 3 (Con't.)

Implementation Status of Recommendations from Six Evaluation Reports

Project	Publication Date	Recommendation	Status of Recommendation	Comments and Clarification
AEP		4. Goals and objectives should be established for the program at the district level that are specific enough to enable the definition of suitable instruments to assess the impact of the program, yet sufficiently flexible to allow individual schools some latitude in accommodating differences in student population characteristics and instructional capabilities. The latter qualification addresses the evident reluctance of many respondents to support the notion that program curriculum commonalities should exist across all program schools.	Partially implemented.	Recommendation is in the process of being fully implemented. The program director actively tried to implement this recommendation in 1984-85. A curriculum program was identified that meets program needs and gives acceptable focus for the diverse programs. Through workshops AEP teachers have come to agree that a common set of goals and objectives are needed and possible.
		5. An effort should be made to more adequately orient parents to the program and more clearly explain the admission criteria.	Implemented as presented. Recommendation dependent upon program staff (school-site) personnel for implementation.	Program director agreed with the recommendation and supported its implementation. AEP telephone survey indicated that the recommendation was carried out by the schools. Teachers provided more information about admissions criteria and the AEP program in 1984-85.

TABLE 3 (Con't.)

Implementation Status of Recommendations from Six Evaluation Reports

Project	Publication Date	Recommendation	Status of Recommendation	Comments and Clarification
AEP				Letters explaining the program were sent home by all schools in the survey which was a 25% increase over 1983-84. Also seven of the eight schools, 88%, reported holding an orientation meeting with parents. Only 38% held meetings in 1983-84.
		6. If at all possible, the AEP should be scheduled during regular school hours at all schools.	Under consideration.	The decision to hold AEP classes only during the regular school day is pending the results of the 1984-85 evaluation which is designed to assess the impact of the program on cognitive abilities. If it is found that program impact is not as strong for the after-school students, then the recommendation will be implemented.

TABLE 3 (Con't.)

Implementation Status of Recommendations from Six Evaluation Reports

Project	Publication Date	Recommendation	Status of Recommendation	Comments and Clarification
English Oral Fluency of Limited English Proficient (LEP) Twelfth Grade Students (ESOL)	August 1984	1. Future evaluations of LEP students in ESOL programs should examine the factors which contribute significantly to students' acquisition of English in the most effective, rapid and cost efficient way. Oral testing of individual students appears to be a viable method of determining oral English fluency, and should be one of the measures used.	Implemented as presented.	The 1984-85 evaluation of criteria for exiting ESOL is a direct outcome of the recommendations and findings of the 1983-84 evaluation. The procedures identified in this recommendation are being employed in the 1984-85 evaluation.
		2. Oral proficiency, although important, is only one measure of a student's abilities in a second language. A complete assessment of a student's total language abilities should address reading, writing and cultural dimensions as well. Other factors, such as grades, exposure/contact to the second language outside of school, motivation and teacher judgment, in the form of a "profile" should also be included in the long-range plan for establishing English proficiency criteria for 12th grade ESOL students.	Under consideration. Implementation is dependent upon the outcome of the 1984-85 evaluation of ESOL exit criteria at the senior high school level. If implemented it will be for all grade levels, not only 12th grade.	The 1984-85 evaluation of criteria for exiting ESOL addresses the issues raised in this recommendation. The Bilingual Education/Foreign Language Department has addressed this recommendation by initiating case studies of early and late exiters. A teacher on special assignment (TSA) has been conducting the case studies.

TABLE 3 (Con't.)

Implementation Status of Recommendations from Six Evaluation Reports

Project	Publication Date	Recommendation	Status of Recommendation	Comments and Clarification
ESOL		3. Oral testing of individual students appears to be a viable method of determining LEP students' oral English fluency, provided that the test adequately samples the oral language skills and tasks the student needs to master, is reasonably easy to administer and score, and minimum training of testers or ESOL teachers is required. The B.E.S.T. and Supplement, or a locally developed and validated test that follows the B.E.S.T. "model," is recommended.	Under consideration. Implementation will depend on the outcomes of the evaluation of exit criteria.	The recommendation proposed testing oral language skills of LEP students. Evaluation of instruments that measure oral proficiency was undertaken as part of the 1984-85 ESOL evaluation of exit criteria. The instrument(s) and procedures selected will depend on the results of the evaluation.
		4. The oral test selected for county-wide use at the senior high school level, e.g. placement, exit criteria, etc., should be field-tested with a sufficient number of students in each of grades 9-12, in each of the ESOL classifications.	Partially implemented.	1984-85 evaluation of ESOL exit criteria included two tests of oral proficiency. Both tests were applied to students in all grades and ESOL classifications. Further field-testing may be necessary, but that will depend on decisions about which instruments will be used for establishing exit criteria.

TABLE 3 (Con't.)

Implementation Status of Recommendations from Six Evaluation Reports

Project	Publication Date	Recommendation	Status of Recommendation	Comments and Clarification
ESOL		5. The Oral Proficiency Rating Scale adapted for this evaluation would aid ESOL teachers in assessing the oral proficiency skills of their students. Further refinement and field-testing of the scale, to reflect different age levels and curriculum content, is suggested.	Partially implemented.	The Bilingual Education/Foreign Language Department decided to refine the scale already in use by ESOL teachers rather than adopt a new scale.
		6. Concurrent validity of the instrument(s) selected should be obtained through administering, to a sample of the senior high school students, A) a second, non-structured oral proficiency test, e.g., the OPI; and B) a measure of all of the language skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing and cultural awareness, through general language proficiency test, e.g., the Pre-TOEFL or the SLEP. Teacher ratings of the tested students' oral language skills should also be obtained from a sample of experienced secondary ESOL teachers.	Implemented as presented.	This recommendation was carried out in the 1984-85 ESOL evaluation.

TABLE 3 (Con't.)

Implementation Status of Recommendations from Six Evaluation Reports

Project	Publication Date	Recommendation	Status of Recommendation	Comments and Clarification
ESOL		7. Student membership in ESOL programs by ESOL classification needs to be updated each semester in senior high schools. In gathering information for the selection of students for this evaluation, evaluators found many students whose ESOL levels were not current.	Implemented as presented.	The Bilingual Education/Foreign Language Department established stricter policies, requiring that the schools keep more accurate records of student enrollment in ESOL classes.

TABLE 3 (Con't.)

Implementation Status of Recommendations from Six Evaluation Reports

Project	Publication Date	Recommendation	Status of Recommendation	Comments and Clarification
Dropout Prevention and Reduction (Project Success)	February 1984	1. Team leaders from each of the schools involved in the project should be responsible for maintaining records on participating students, extending back to at least the ninth grade, including such data as grades (both academic and conduct), attendance figures, conduct records, and, if applicable, more precise reasons for withdrawal from school.	1983-84: Partially implemented.	Team leader responsibilities were tightened up, but record keeping continued to be a problem. This was attributed in part to the lack of financial incentives and staff time to maintain records.
			1984-85: Partially implemented.	Although records have improved, obtaining accurate records remained a problem in 1984-85. The issue of financial incentive was resolved with payment of a sixth period supplement to team leaders.
		2. A control group should be established to better ascertain the effects of the project.	1983-84: Partially implemented.	A comparison group in one school was incorporated into the project in midyear in accordance with this recommendation.
			1984-85: Implemented as presented.	A control group was incorporated into the design of Project Trio, the successor to Project Success. A control group was selected at the beginning of the 1984-85 school year.

TABLE 3 (Con't.)

Implementation Status of Recommendations from Six Evaluation Reports

Project	Publication Date	Recommendation	Status of Recommendation	Comments and Clarification
Project Success		3. More effort should be expended toward the involvement of project student parents.	1983-84: Implemented as presented.	Staff reported that they provided more opportunities for parental involvement, but there was no increase in parental involvement. It was suggested that additional funding might have helped since there would have been available staff to work with parents.
			1984-85: Implementation continued.	Parental involvement activities continued. Parents continue to be less involved than project staff would like.
		4. Some type of credit or other reward needs to be considered for the teachers involved in the project, especially team leaders.	1983-84: Considered and rejected by project funding source. Evaluation recommendations were not available when the project was approved and funded for 1983-84. Recommendation confirmed 1983-84 project proposal request.	Proposal for 1983-84 included a request for financial aid for participating staff. This was independent of the evaluation report recommendation. Some funds were made available for staff who tutored students only. These funds did not address the issue of paying staff for time devoted to project activities.
			Partially implemented.	Recognition of staff efforts were made through presentation of awards at end of school year.

TABLE 3 (Con't)

Implementation Status of Recommendations from Six Evaluation Reports

Project	Publication Date	Recommendation	Status of Recommendation	Comments and Clarification
Project Success			1984-85: Implemented as presented.	Funds were obtained for 6th period supplement to pay team leaders. In one school, the principal budgeted a sixth period supplement for two additional team members. Funds for tutoring were available on a limited basis.
		5. If additional monies can be found, a full-time coordinator should be acquired to follow up with project students.	1983-84: Considered and rejected by project funding source. Recommendation confirmed 1983-84 project request.	Request for full-time coordinator included in 1983-84 proposal. Not funded.
			1984-85: Considered and rejected.	Request for a full-time coordinator was included in 1984-85 proposal. The position was not funded. Although there are staff supervising the program at present, no one person has been assigned full-time to that program. All supervisory staff have multiple responsibilities involving various dropout prevention programs.

TABLE 3 (Con't)

Implementation Status of Recommendations from Six Evaluation Reports

Project	Publication Date	Recommendation	Status of Recommendation	Comments and Clarification
Project Success		6. The identification of students for this project should be initiated at the eighth grade level.	1983-84: Partially implemented. Recommendation confirmed actions taken by staff prior to publication of evaluation report.	One junior high school was included in the 1983-84 project year due to staff initiative, and available funds.
			1984-85: Implemented at presented.	1984-85 project proposal cited this recommendation. It was reported as strengthening the proposal. Project Trio (the successor to Project Success) included six junior high and middle schools in the feeder patterns of project senior high schools. Therefore identification process is beginning earlier.
		7. Within school communications regarding the objectives and activities of the project, directed at both faculty and students should be enhanced.	1983-84: Implemented as presented. Recommendation confirmed actions taken by staff prior to publication of evaluation report.	Meetings with faculty were held especially in those schools where attitudes toward project were negative.
		8. Individual school action plans should be re-evaluated toward the end of selecting the most effective of these for future applications.	1983-84: Partially implemented. Confirmed project procedures.	Review of schools plans was an ongoing process. Teams were encouraged to share their successful practices.
			1984-85: Under consideration.	Each school has its own model. Part of the current evaluation is an examination of the different models. Project Trio expects to develop various models.

TABLE 3 (Con't.)

Implementation Status of Recommendations from Six Evaluation Reports

Project	Publication Date	Recommendation	Status of Recommendation	Comments and Clarification
Computer Education (CEP)	December 1983	1. The ECIA Chapter II Computer Education Project should be refunded for another year.	Implemented as presented. Funding for the 1983-84 school year was provided prior to the publication of the evaluation. Recommendation confirmed actions taken.	The program director indicated that the evaluation reports have been supportive when proposals have been presented to the Citizen Review Committee and the School Board. Project was refunded in 1984-85 and evaluation reports were presented.
		2. Consideration should be given to the possibility of placing a major emphasis on the completion and operation of the software consortium in proposals for continuation of this project.	Implemented as presented.	The computer lab was a direct development of this recommendation. It provided the major focus for the computer education program in subsequent years.

TABLE 3 (Con't.)

Implementation Status of Recommendations from Six Evaluation Reports

Project	Publication Date	Recommendation	Status of Recommendation	Comments and Clarification
Beginning Teacher Program (BTP)	September 1983	1. Improve the orientation programs for peer teachers by incorporating training in conferencing techniques and providing detailed information on the procedures and content of the teacher observation/evaluation methods.	Implemented as presented.	Peer teachers were provided necessary training via videotape on conferencing techniques. Also they received orientation on the TADS evaluation instrument.
		2. Implement a more comprehensive orientation and training program for building-level administrators and other professional educators.	Implemented as presented.	Area-wide orientation/training meetings were held in each of the four areas for building-level administrators and other professional educators.
		3. Implement a review of the communication network between staffing control and the BTP office in an effort to identify and eliminate barriers to speedy identification of beginning teachers. Procedures for notifying the BTP office of status changes should also be reviewed.	Implemented as presented.	Meetings were held at the beginning of 1983-84 school year to discuss and resolve personnel issues related to the Beginning Teacher Program. However, problems were still being identified in 1984-85.

TABLE 3 (Con't.)

Implementation Status of Recommendations from Six Evaluation Reports

Project	Publication Date	Recommendation	Status of Recommendation	Comments and Clarification
BTP		4. Initiate more frequent contacts with program participants for the purpose of providing information and more direction.	Implemented as presented.	Audits were carried out at each site where a beginning teacher was assigned. A newsletter was distributed periodically to all program participants.
		5. Periodically monitor support teams to ensure that teams are functioning properly. This would include a review of portfolios and verification of the existence and appropriateness of written professional development plans.	Implemented as presented.	Onsite audit was conducted at each school and included review of the portfolio of each project participant. BTP administrative staff was increased in 1983-84.

APPENDIX C

USE OF EVALUATIONS IN EDUCATION: AN OVERVIEW

The scientific evaluation of education and social action programs became important to the federal government decision-making process in the 1960's. It was a direct outcome of the Great Society and the War on Poverty initiatives that provided huge federal expenditures for a wide variety of government programs. Program evaluation was built into legislative funding to ensure a system of accountability, a way of measuring effectiveness, and an objecive basis for deciding the future of programs (Patton, 1978; Weiss, 1977).

As the demand for program evaluation expanded, so did the need to understand how evaluation information was used, if at all, in the decision-making process at national, state and local levels. Since the late 1960's evaluation utilization has been widely research and even more extensively discussed. The emphasis has been on defining and describing the uses of evaluation information in the decision-making process and the factors that contribute to utilization.

How Evaluation Is Used

While not very common, evaluation information has been found to directly affect decisions about educational programs (Alkin, Daillak and White, 1979; King and Pechman, 1984). To show that this occurred, there should be clear indications that the evaluation information was considered and used in reaching the decision, and that it was unlikely such a decision would have been reached without the evaluation results. Examples of direct influence are: the implementation of recommendations as proposed in the evaluation; termination of a program based on the outcomes of an evaluation; and budget increases based on needs identified in the evaluation.

More frequently it has been found that evaluation results influence programs and decision-making in indirect and gradual ways. In the real-world of education and social services decision-making, policy changes are usually not abrupt, but occur over time as information builds up and political and economic forces converge (Berke, 1983; Weiss, 1977; Wise, 1978).

Evaluation information may influence decision makers' thinking about a program without specific actions being tied directly to the information. It has been shown that evaluation information may enhance understanding of issues, verify the implementation of a program, illuminate the contexts to which programs operate, influence ideas and attitudes about a program, and confirm the value of ongoing program practices (Boruch and Cordray, 1980; Weiss, 1981).

In this regard research also indicates that evaluation utilization occurs even when it cannot be demonstrated that

recommendations led to implementation, or that the evaluation findings led to immediate decisions (Brown and Braskamp, 1980). This has been the "conceptual use" of evaluation information to contrast it with "instrumental use" where findings and recommendations are used directly in decision-making. Although a somewhat arbitrary distinction, it is nonetheless an important one to make because conceptual use is much more pervasive and potentially more consequential in program development and policymaking (Patton et al, 1977; Rich, 1977; Kennedy, 1984).

A recent summary of findings by the Evaluation Training Project (Brinkerhoff, Brethower, Hluchyj, and Nowarkowski, 1983) reflects the current thinking of the majority of researchers studying evaluation utilization:

> Recent research (Alkin et al, 1979; Patton, 1978; Braskamp, Brown and Newman, 1980) reinforces the notion that evaluation can and does have impact beyond being "used" in decisions. It can reduce decision-makers' uncertainty, make people more aware, reinforce policy and create support to name a few additional purposes. Further, this research shows that evaluation data can rarely be linked directly to a decision. To limit reporting purposes to decision-making is to drastically limit the potential ability of evaluation. (pp.152-153)

Factors That Affect Utilization

Factors influencing program evaluation utilization have been studied to identify those that contribute most to the use of evaluation information. Among the factors studied systematically, one has been singled out continually as wielding a powerful influence in decision to accept and implement recommendations or to reject or ignore them--what has been called the "political" factor (Patton, 1978).

The fact that actions and decision are the desire result of educational program evaluations, and that these actions and decision impact on allocation of resources, authority and position within an institution, casts evaluation clearly as an instrument in changing power relationships. There is little doubt that such "political" considerations influence utilization of findings and recommendations, and objective, professional evaluators must be aware of them. Insofar as an evaluator sees his or her role not only as a provider of information, but also as a member of an institution with a stake in the institution's productve functioning, the use of findings and recommendations becomes a prime element in successful evaluation.

Viewed in this manner, successful evaluation is heavily dependent upon the evaluator's sensitivity to the political context influencing both the program development and evaluation. Although these forces are essentially beyond the direct control of evaluators, knowing about them can lead to actions in other areas, described below, that may have impact on the political conditions for decision makers.

Among the many factors that evaluators can control to a greater or lesser degree, and whose impact on the utilization of findings and recommendations has been studied (Caplan, Morrison and Stambaugh, 1975; Collins, 1982; Levitan and Hughes, 1981), major emphasis has been directed at an examination of the characteristics of:

1) the evaluation process;

2) evaluator/user relationships;

3) evaluation reports;

4) evaluators; and

5) users of evaluation information.

From the research and the accumulated experience in the conduct of program evaluation by noted experts in the field, the factors most closely related to the use of evaluation information appear to be 2) and 5) : characteristics of evaluator/user relationships, and characteristics of users of evaluation information.

Surprisingly the quality of an evaluation design, its procedures and reporting, has not been shown to be significantly related to utilization (Patton et al, 1977). This apparently is due to the fact that users of evaluation information, by and large, are not knowledgeable about research methodology and remain unaware of differences in quality along this dimension. This places great responsibility on the evaluator to ensure that the evaluation design is sound and capable of adequately providing answers to the questions that decision makers have.

Another unexpected finding has been that whether the evaluation findings and recommendations are mainly negative or mainly positive about a program does not appear to affect utilization. What has been found more important for utilization is that recommendations do not come as a surprise -- if they do there is a higher likelihood of rejection. This emphasizes the importance of communication between evaluators and users, suggested in 2) above, and especially preparing the potential user of information to all possible outcomes.

Productive relationships between evaluators and users of evaluation information are especially crucial for achieving utilization of findings and recommendations. Fundamental to greater utilization is the involvement of program staff in the evaluation process at several points throughout its life-cycle, particularly involvement of the highest possible level of decision makers. Effective involvement of program staff (i.e. involvement which creates a higher level of acceptance and utilization of findings and recommendations) takes several forms, including:

A. Forming evaluation objectives and questions to be addressed;

B. Identifying other people who should be involved in the development of questions and objectives;

C. Identifying the most important segments of the study population from whom to derive information;

D. Reviewing evaluation instruments to achieve correct content and to serve the many audiences needing evaluation information;

E. Top management receiving rapid feedback from evaluators about problems encountered;

F. Top management reviewing data interpretation prior to final report, preparing "minority report" to be included;

G. All program levels receiving findings and recommendations; and

H. Maintaining contact with evaluator through dissemination and implementation of findings and recommendations.

All of these examples of a collaborative, adaptive and reciprocal relationship between the evaluator and the users of information have been suggested as having positive effects. Some of these effects are:

A. Reduction of the element of surprise of negative findings;

B. Development of trust in the evaluator on the part of the users;

C. Increasing commitment of managers to utilization of evaluation information;

D. Increasing the probability that recommended actions

appear to the managers to be clearly related to findings; and,

E. Greater range of program staff receive communications about results, opening a wider variety of channels for encouraging utilization.

Over all, it appears clear from the available literature on the subject that, without commitment and energy dedicated to evaluation on the part of program management and staff, utilization of evaluation findings and recommendations will be limited, at best. What is necessary are identifiable people who personally care about the evaluation and the information it generates. Where such people are present, evaluations are used; where absent, there is a correspondingly marked absence of evaluation impact. Users of evaluations are people who "are actively seeking information to reduce decision uncertainties so as to increase their ability to predict the outcomes of programmatic activity and to enhance their own discretion as decision makers: (Patton, 1978, p.68).

What also appears clear is that evaluators can take positive action to improve the probability of utilization without compromising the objectivity of the evaluation. In fact, by involving the program staff and managers at all points in the process, the evaluations become more attuned to the reality of the program and are, in that way, more, rather than less, objective.

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